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THE
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OF
TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M. D.
WITH
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS
ON HIS WORKS.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON, M. D.

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LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. MUNDELL & CO. EDINBURGH;
AND FOR
J. MUNDELL, COLLEGE, GLASGOW.
1796.

THE

LIFE

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IN all ages in which literature has been held in estimation, the lives of excellent writers have been subjects of public curiosity ; and persons have taken pains to collect facts respecting them which might exhibit a view of their characters and writings.

Of the numbers of learned and ingenious men who have benefited the present age by their studies, and added to the reputation of Great Britain by their writings, few will be found more deserving of biographical notice than the subject of this narrative, whether we consider the utility and elegance of his literary compositions, the force and vivacity of his mind, or the disinterestedness and independence of his spirit.

He who employs laborious days and sleepless nights in composing writings, which, as they instruct by their intelligence, or please by their elegance, either facilitate the attainment of knowledge, or smooth the asperities of life, is entitled to the grateful recollection of posterity.

Of the personal history of SMOLLETT, less is known than his rank in English literature might give reason to expect. It is said, and probably with some truth, that the chief incidents in the early part of his life were given to the world in his novel of *Roderick Random*. Whether that report is well founded or not, it is not easy, nor necessary to know. The incidents, if real,

are certainly a good deal heightened by invention, and disguised by the decorations of fiction. No credit, therefore, is due to them, as authorities, in a work of truth; and they are not followed by the present writer, in this attempt to relate, with the fidelity of biographical narration, what is known of his personal history and literary productions.

He is sorry that the information concerning him which his inquiries have obtained, is so general and scanty, that he must give the history of his life to the world much more briefly than his qualifications deserve; but he has this gratification from relating it, that, however inadequate to his merits, or unsatisfactory to his friends, it may not be altogether unacceptable to the public, who, it has been often observed, will always take an interest in those persons from whose writings they have derived pleasure or instruction.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT was born in the old house of Dalquhurn, on the banks of the Leven, near the village of Renton, in the parish of Cardross, in Dumbartonshire, in 1720. He was descended from an ancient family, of considerable property and influence in that county, which had, on many occasions, signalized itself in behalf of the country, and been distinguished by the most honourable offices in the state. In 1588, the *Florida*, a ship of the Spanish Armada that had the military chest on board, was blown up by one of his ancestors, in one of the bays of the island of Mull. His grandfather, Sir James Smollett, of Bonhill, was a member of the last parliament of Scotland, and one of the commissioners for framing the Treaty of Union. His father was the youngest of his sons, and, according to the custom of the country, received only a small share of Sir James's fortune. His mother, whose maiden name was Cunningham, was the daughter of a respectable family in Renfrewshire, and a woman of distinguished understanding, taste, and elegance. His father died at an early period of life, and left his family, consisting of two sons and a daughter, with a very moderate provision. His elder brother, whose name was James, embraced the military profession, and perished at sea, off the coast of America,

in the prime of life. His sister was married to Alexander Telfer, Esq. of Symington, in Lanarkshire, and, upon the death of her cousin, James Smollett, Esq. of Bonhill, one of the commissaries of Edinburgh, in 1778, succeeded to the family estate of Bonhill, now in the possession of her son Alexander Smollett, Esq. the representative of the family.

He was instructed in the rudiments of classical learning, at the grammar school of the neighbouring town of Dumbarton, where he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress, and discovered the most promising marks of that fertility of genius which characterized his future life.

After the ordinary course of school education, he was sent to the university of Glasgow, where he prosecuted his studies with such success, that, in three years, it is said, "he understood Greek very well, was pretty far advanced in the mathematics, and no stranger to moral and natural philosophy: Logic, he made no account of; but he took much delight in the *Belles Lettres* and poetry, and had already produced some verses that met with a very favourable reception."

Being born to the prospect of no hereditary riches, the profession which he was destined by his mother to follow, was that of physic; and he was put apprentice to a surgeon in Glasgow, whose character he is supposed to have drawn, under the name of *Crab*, in the broadest style of caricature, in his *Roderick Random*.

He was afterwards sent to the university of Edinburgh, where he studied the several branches of medicine, under the different professors, with sufficient diligence and reputation; but left the university without taking a degree.

While he prosecuted his medical studies at Edinburgh, he was tempted to try his powers in dramatic poetry, and wrote, in his eighteenth year, a tragedy, called *The Regicide*; or, *James the First of Scotland*, founded on the story of the assassination of that monarch by his uncle Walter Stuart Earl of Athol, in 1437.

In 1739, at the age of nineteen, he went to London, the great field of genius and exertion, with intention to

follow the profession of physic, with no other helps than the fruitful resources of a mind stored with professional knowledge and general literature, a rich vein of humour, a lively imagination, and an engaging person and address.

On his arrival in London, his tragedy, he tells us in the *preface*, with some recommendations from his literary friends, "was taken into the protection of one of those little fellows, who is sometimes called great men, and, like other orphans, neglected accordingly."

"Stung with resentment," he adds, "which I mistook for contempt, I resolved to punish this barbarous indifference, and actually discarded my patron; consoling myself with the barren praise of a few associates, who, in the most indefatigable manner, employed their time and influence in collecting, from all quarters, observations on my piece, which, in consequence of these suggestions, put on a new appearance almost every day, until my occasions called me out of the kingdom."

His first outset in the world appears to have been as a surgeon's mate in the navy. In this capacity he served in the fleet, under Admiral Vernon, at the siege of Carthagena, in 1741.

In his *Roderick Random*, he gives an account of the management of that ill-conducted expedition, which he censures in the warmest terms, and from circumstances which fell under his own particular observation. He is supposed to have been the editor of "A Compendium of Authentic Voyages, digested in a Chronological Series," 7 vols. 12mo, 1756; amongst which is inserted, *A Short Narrative of the Expedition to Carthagena, 1741*, written, by the supposed editor, with great spirit, but abounding with acrimony.

It was here he acquired his knowledge of the characters of seamen, which he has drawn in a manner so excellent, and at the same time so technically true, as to excite general admiration; and they have continued the model for dramatists and novelists to copy.

He continued only a short time in the service of the navy, being disgusted at the drudgery to which his pro-

essional duty exposed him; and, having no other employment, betook himself to his pen for subsistence.

It is probable that he wrote several pieces before he became known to the public by his capital productions.

His first publication that is known with certainty, is, *The Advice and Reproof*, two satires, printed in 1746 and 1747. The plan of this performance is similar to that of one of Pope's satires: A dialogue is supposed to be carried on between the poet and his friend, who is represented as giving him advice, to which he answers with great spirit, and, in his replies, indulges his satiric vein with no small degree of freedom.

In the same year, he expressed his indignation at the severities exercised upon the Highlanders, by the royal army, after the battle of Culloden, in an exquisite ode, intituled, *The Tears of Scotland*.

In 1748, he published his *Adventures of Roderick Random*, in 2 vols. 12mo, an historical novel, executed, he tells us in the *preface*, upon the plan of Le Sage, in his "Adventures of Gil Blas," except where he thought his particular situations were uncommon or extravagant, or peculiar to the country in which the scene is laid. The first volume, and the beginning of the second, are supposed to consist of real incident and character, "although the circumstances are altered and disguised to avoid personal satire." *Crab* and *Potion*, the two apothecaries, and *Squire Gawkey*, were characters well known in that part of the kingdom where the scene is laid. *Captains Oakbum* and *Whiffle*, and *Doctors Mackshane* and *Morgan*, were also said to be real persons. A bookbinder and barber are said to have long eagerly contended for being designed under the character of *Strap*, but their names are now forgotten. This novel had a rapid sale, and laid the foundation of his fame.

About this period, or some time before, he wrote for Mr. Rich, manager of Covent Garden theatre, an opera, intituled *Alceste*, which has never been performed nor printed. The music to it was composed by Handel, who, finding that no use was intended to be made of

it, afterwards adapted it to Dryden's lesser Ode for St. Cecilia's Day *.

His tragedy of *The Regicide* being, as he thought, completely finished, and fitted for the stage, he offered it to Mr. Lacey, and afterwards to Mr. Garrick and Mr. Rich; but, "after a cajoling dream of good fortune," it was still unsuccessful, and finally rejected.

This unfortunate production, after having been exposed, during a period of ten years, to the censure of critics of all degrees, and, in consequence of their several opinions, altered and amended, times without number, was published in 1749, by subscription, very much, it is said, to his emolument, with a *preface*, in which he exclaimed bitterly against false patrons, and the duplicity of theatrical managers; and he resented the injury by severe retaliations in his future writings.

Lyttleton, Lacey, and Garrick, were the principal objects of his resentment. The character of the former he satirized in his novel of *Peregrine Pickle*; and he added a *Burlesque Ode* on that nobleman's excellent "Monody" on the death of his lady.

"I and my production," says the *preface*, "were introduced to a late patentee [Mr. Lacey], of courteous memory, who found means to amuse me a whole season, and then declared it impracticable to bring it on till next year, advising me to make my application more early in the winter, that we might have time to correct such alterations as should be thought necessary for its successful appearance on the stage. But I did not find my account in following this wholesome advice; for to me he was always less and less at leisure. In short, after sundry promises, and many evasions, in the course of which he practised upon me the whole art of procrastination, I demanded his final answer, with such obstinacy and warmth, that he could no longer resist my importunity, and refused my tragedy in plain terms. Not that he mentioned any material objections to the piece itself, but seemed to fear my interest was not sufficient to support it in the representation; affirming, that *no dramatic composition, however perfect, could succeed with an English*

* Hawkins's History of Music, Vol. I. p. 28. Vol. V. p. 324.

audience, by its own merit, but must entirely depend upon a faction raised in its behalf."

Against Garrick, he made illiberal, ill-founded strictures in the *preface*; and, in his *Roderick Random*, gave a very unfair representation of his treatment of him respecting this tragedy.

The unjust reflections into which the warmth and impetuosity of his temper hurried him on this occasion, he afterwards regretted; and, in handsome terms, retracted the hasty effusions of his disappointment, in giving a sketch of the liberal arts, during the reign of George II. in his *History of England*.

"The exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment, by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression.

"Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher spheres of life, embellished by the nervous sense and extensive erudition of a Corke, by the delicate taste and tender feelings of a *Lyttleton*."

Not satisfied with this public declaration of his sentiments, he acknowledged his errors, in still stronger terms, in the following letter to Garrick, dated Chelsea, Jan. 27. 1762.

"I this morning received your *Winter's Tale*, and am agreeably flattered by this mark of your attention. What I have said of Mr. Garrick in the *History of England*, was, I protest, the language of my heart. I shall rejoice if he thinks I have done him barely justice. I am sure the public will think I have done no more than justice. In giving a short sketch of the liberal arts, I could not, with any propriety, forbear mentioning a gentleman so eminently distinguished by a genius that has no rival. Besides, I thought it was a duty incumbent on me in particular to make a public atonement, in a work of truth, for wrongs done him in a work of fiction.

"Among the other inconveniencies arising from ill health, I deeply regret my being disabled from a personal cultivation of your good-will, and the unspeakable enjoyment I should sometimes derive from your private conversation, as well as from the public exertion of your talents; but, sequestered as I am from the world of entertainment, the consciousness of standing well in your opinion, will ever afford singular satisfaction to, &c."

The success attending his novel of *Roderick Random*, encouraged him to exercise his abilities in that species of composition; and, in 1751, he published *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, in 4 vols. 12mo, in which he introduced the *Memoirs* of the celebrated *Lady Vane*, the materials of which, it is said, she herself furnished. This episode, which he received a very handsome reward for inserting, excited much attention, and contributed greatly to its success.

Lady Vane was the daughter of Francis Hawes, Esq. of Purley-Hall, near Reading in Berkshire, one of the South-Sea directors in 1720, and married about the beginning of 1732, at the age of seventeen, to Lord William Hamilton, who, dying July 11. 1734, she married, May 19. 1735, Lord Viscount Vane of the kingdom of Ireland, with whom she lived and parted, and parted and lived; and died in London, March 31. 1788, in the seventy-second year of her age. She was reckoned the finest minuet dancer in England; and, in personal charms and accomplishments, inferior to no woman who has appeared in the eighteenth century. To the fate of this lady, Dr. Johnson has a striking allusion in his "*Vanity of Human Wishes*."

Yet *Vane* could tell what ills from beauty spring,
And *Sedley* curs'd the form that pleas'd a king.

Her life afforded a melancholy instance of the miseries inseparable from a misapplication of superior talents and elegant accomplishments. The misunderstandings, elopements, and various disgraceful situations to which she exposed herself, are too well known to be concealed, (several of them being recorded in the legal reports,) but may now, with no impropriety, be buried in oblivion.

The anecdotes respecting *Lady Vane*, which are in-

serted in *Peregrine Pickle*, produced "A Letter to Lady V—, on her Memoirs in *Peregrine Pickle*," 8vo, 1751. "History of Lady Frail," 12mo, 1751; "Parallel between the character of Lady Frail and the Lady of Quality, in *Peregrine Pickle*," 8vo, 1751; and "Apology for the conduct of Lady Frail," 8vo, 1751; and other performances, now deservedly neglected.

About this time, having obtained the degree of Doctor of Physic, he settled as a Physician at Bath, and with that view, published *An Essay on the External Use of Water, in a Letter to Dr. —*, with particular Remarks upon the present Method of using the Mineral Waters at Bath in Somersetshire, and a Plan for rendering them more Safe, Agreeable, and Efficacious, 4to, 1752. The performance advanced his reputation, as a man of science and taste, but failed to conduct the physician to professional eminence and wealth. Its value is now considerably diminished by subsequent discoveries in pneumatic chemistry. This is the only professional publication which is known, or suspected to have proceeded from his pen.

Having been unsuccessful, or perhaps too soon discouraged, he relinquished the practice of physic, fixed his residence at Chelsea, and dedicated the whole of his time to literature.

It has been said, that his want of success in a profession where merit cannot always ensure good fortune, was owing to his failing to make himself agreeable to the women; but his figure and address, both of which were excellent, render this highly improbable. It is more likely, that his irritable temper, and his contempt for the low arts of finesse, servility, and cunning, were the real causes of his failure.

As an author by profession, his genius and industry were equally conspicuous in the several provinces of novel-writing; of writing for the booksellers; of writing for the stage; and of writing for a faction in the name of the community. The booksellers, for many years, were his principal resource for employment and subsistence. For them he held the pen of a ready writer, in compilations, translations, &c.; and towards him they

were always as liberal as the public enabled them to be. They were almost his only Mécénafes; and indeed a more generous set of men can hardly be pointed out in the trading world. By their munificence, wit and learning have perhaps received more ample, more substantial encouragement, than from all their princely or noble patrons, from Augustus down to Lewis XIV. The astonishing sums which have been paid for manuscripts by our Tonsons, our Lintots, our Millars, our Strahans, and our Cadells, are sufficient to rescue the venders of literature from the reproach of suffering the dispensers of knowledge to consume themselves in the operation.

In 1753, he published his *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, in 2 vols. 12mo. In the *Dedication to Dr. S—*, he bestows some strictures on himself, and justifies the introduction of vicious characters into works of fiction, by way of exposing them to ridicule and shame, with considerable energy and effect. This novel was not so generally read, on its first appearance, and has not since obtained such an extensive popularity as his *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*.

This year, in consequence of repeated insults of the most flagrant kind, he was provoked to chastise one Peter Gordon, in such a manner as to give him a handle for a prosecution in the Court of King's Bench, for an intended assassination. Of that suspicion he was honourably acquitted, upon his trial, by the verdict of the jury. The Honourable Alexander Hume-Campbell, the prosecutor's counsel, having exceeded the licence of the bar, in opening the cause, he drew up the following "rough draught of a letter," demanding adequate reparation for the injurious treatment he had received at his hand, which he communicated to his friend Daniel Mackercher, Esq. with a note, dated Chelsea, Feb. 23. 1753, signifying his intention to send it to Mr. Hume-Campbell, provided he thought it contained nothing actionable. It is not known whether it was sent to that gentleman, or whether he retracted what he said to Smollett's prejudice. It is preserved here, not only as it shows his sentiments concerning Mr. Hume-Camp-

bell, a celebrated counsellor, and parliamentary orator of that time; but as it exhibits some of the leading features of his own character.

"I have waited several days in hope of receiving from you an acknowledgment touching those harsh, unjustifiable (and let me add), unmannerly expressions which you annexed to my name, in the Court of King's Bench, when you opened the cause depending between me and Peter Gordon; and as I do not find that you have discovered the least inclination to retract what you said to my prejudice, I have taken this method to refresh your memory, and to demand such satisfaction as a gentleman, injured as I am, has a right to claim.

"The business of a counsellor, is, I apprehend, to investigate the truth in behalf of his client; but surely he has no privilege to blacken and asperse the character of the other party, without any regard to veracity or decorum. That you assumed this unwarrantable privilege in commenting upon your brief, I believe you will not pretend to deny, when I remind you of those peculiar flowers of elocution which you poured forth on that notable occasion.—First of all, in order to inspire the Court with horror and contempt for the defendant, you gave the jury to understand that you did not know this Dr. Smollett; and, indeed, his character appeared in such a light from the facts contained in your brief, that you never should desire to know him.—I should be glad to learn of what consequence it could be to the cause, whether you did or did not know the defendant, or whether you had or had not an inclination to be acquainted with him?—Sir, this was a pitiful personality, calculated to depreciate the character of a gentleman to whom you was a stranger, merely to gratify the rancour and malice of an abandoned fellow who had feed you to speak in his cause.—Did I ever seek your acquaintance, or court your protection? I had been informed, indeed, that you was a lawyer of some reputation, and, when the suit commenced, would have retained you for that reason, had not I been anticipated by the plaintiff; but, far from coveting your acquaintance, I never dreamed of exchanging a word with you on that or any other

subject: you might therefore have spared your invidious declaration, until I had put it in your power to mortify me with a repulse, which, upon my honour, would never have been the case, were you a much greater man than you really are.—Yet this was not the only expedient you used to prepossess the jury against me.—You was hardy enough to represent me as a person devoid of all humanity and remorse; as a barbarous ruffian, who, in a cowardly manner, had, with two associates as barbarous as myself, called a peaceable gentleman out of his lodgings, and assaulted him in the dark, with intent to murder.—Such an horrid imputation, publicly fixed upon a person whose innocence you could hardly miss to know, is an outrage, for which, I believe, I might find reparation from the law itself, notwithstanding your artful manner of qualifying the expression by saying, *provided the facts can be proved*. This low subterfuge may, for aught I know, screen you from a prosecution at law, but can never acquit you in that court which every man of honour holds in his own breast. I say, you must have known my innocence, from the weakness of the evidence which you produced, and with which you either was, or ought to have been previously acquainted; as well as from my general character and that of my antagonist, which it was your duty to have learned.—I will venture to say, you did know my character, and in your heart believed me incapable of such brutality as you laid to my charge.—Surely I do not over-rate my own importance in affirming, that I am not so obscure in life as to have escaped the notice of Mr. Hume-Campbell; and I will be bold enough to challenge him and the whole world to prove one instance in which my integrity was called, or at least left in question.—Have not I, therefore, reason to suppose that, in spite of your own internal conviction, you undertook the cause of a wretch, whose ingratitude, villany, and rancour are, I firmly believe, without example in this kingdom; that you magnified a slight correction bestowed by his benefactor, in consequence of the most insolent provocation, into a deliberate and malicious scheme of assassination; and endeavoured, with all the virulence

of defamation, to destroy the character, and even the life, of an injured person, who, as well as yourself, is a gentleman by birth, education, and profession? In favour of whom, and in consequence of what, was all this zeal manifested, all this slander exhausted, and all this scurrility discharged? Your client, whom you dignified with the title of Esquire, and endeavoured to raise to the same footing with me in point of station and character, you knew to be an abject miscreant, whom my compassion and humanity had lifted from the most deplorable scenes of distress; whom I had saved from imprisonment and ruin; whom I had clothed and fed for a series of years; whom I had occasionally assisted with my purse, credit, and influence.—You knew, or ought to have known, that, after having received a thousand marks of my benevolence, and prevailed upon me to indorse notes for the support of his credit, he withdrew himself into the verge of the Court, and took up his habitation in a paltry alehouse, where he not only set me and the rest of his creditors at defiance, but provoked me, by scurrilous and insolent letters and messages, to chastise him in such a manner as gave him an handle for this prosecution, in which you signalized yourself as his champion, for a very honourable consideration.—There is something so palpably ungrateful, perfidious, and indeed diabolical, in the conduct of the prosecutor, that, even in these degenerate days, I wonder how he could find an Attorney to appear in his behalf. *O Tempora! O Mores!*—After having thus sounded the trumpet of obloquy in your preamble, and tortured every circumstance of the plaintiff's evidence to my detriment and dishonour, you attempted to subject me to the ridicule of the Court, by asking a question of my first witness, which had no more relation to the cause, than if you had desired to know the name of his grandmother.—What title had you to ask of a tradesman, if he knew me to be an author? What affinity had this question with the circumstances of the assault? Was not this foreign to the purpose? Was it not impertinent, and proposed with a view to put me out of countenance, and to raise the laugh of the spectators at my expence? There,

indeed, you was disappointed, as you frequently are in those little digressive efforts by which you make yourself remarkable.—Though I do not pretend to possess that superlative degree of effrontery by which some people make a figure at the bar, I have assurance enough to stand the mention of my works without blushing, especially when I despise the taste, and scorn the principles, of him who would turn them to my disgrace.—You succeeded, however, in one particular; I mean, in raising the indignation of my witness; of which you took all imaginable advantage, puzzling, perplexing, and brow-beating him with such artifice, eagerness, and insult, as overwhelmed him with confusion, and had well nigh deprived me of the benefit of his evidence.— Luckily for me, the next gentleman who was called, confirmed what the other had swore, and proved to the satisfaction of the judge and jury, and even to your own conviction, that this terrible deliberate assassination was no more than a simple blow given to a rascal after repeated provocation, and that of the most flagrant kind; that no advantage was taken in point of weapons; and that two drabs, whom they had picked up for the purpose, had affirmed upon oath a downright falsehood, with a view to blast my reputation.—You yourself was so conscious of this palpable detection, that you endeavoured to excuse them by a forced explanation, which, you may depend upon it, shall not screen them from a prosecution for perjury.—I will not say, that this was like patronizing a couple of gypsies who had foresworn themselves, consequently forfeited all title to the countenance, or indeed forbearance, of the Court; but this I will say, that your tenderness for them, was of a piece with your whole behaviour to me, which I think was equally insolent and unjust: for, granting that you had really supposed me guilty of an intended assassination, before the trial began, you saw me in the course of evidence acquitted of that suspicion, and heard the judge insist upon my innocence in his charge to the jury, who brought in their verdict accordingly. Then, Sir, you ought in common justice to have owned yourself mistaken, or to have taken some other opportunity of ex-

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pressing your concern for what you had said to my disadvantage ; though even such an acknowledgment would not have been a sufficient reparation ; because, before my witnesses were called, many persons left the Court with impressions to my prejudice, conceived from the calumnies which they heard you espouse and encourage. On the whole, you opened the trial with such hyperbolic impetuosity, and conducted it with such particular bitterness and rancour, that every body perceived you was more than ordinarily interested ; and I could not divine the mysterious bond of union that attached you to Peter Gordon, Esq. until you furnished me with a key to the whole secret, by that strong emphasis with which you pronounced the words *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Then I discovered the source of your good-will towards me, which is no other than the history of a law-suit inserted in that performance, where the author takes occasion to observe, that the counsel behaved like men of consummate abilities in their profession ; exerting themselves with equal industry, eloquence, and erudition, in their endeavours to perplex the truth, browbeat the evidence, puzzle the judge, and mislead the jury.—Did any part of this character come home to your own conscience ? or did you resent it as a sarcasm levelled at the whole Bench without distinction ? I take it for granted, this must have been the origin of your enmity to me ; because I can recollect no other circumstance in my conduct, by which I could incur the displeasure of a man whom I scarce knew by sight, and with whom I never had the least dispute, or indeed concern. If this was the case, you pay a very scurvy compliment to your own integrity, by fathering a character which is not applicable to any honest man, and give the world a handle to believe, that our courts of justice stand greatly in need of reformation. Indeed, the petulance, licence, and buffoonery of some lawyers in the exercise of their function, is a reproach upon decency, and a scandal to the nation ; and it is surprising that the judge who represents his Majesty's person, should suffer such insults upon the dignity of the place.—But, whatever liberties of this kind are granted to the counsel, no

fort of freedom, it seems, must be allowed to the evidence, who, by the bye, are of much more consequence to the cause.—You will take upon you to divert the audience at the expence of a witness, by impertinent allusions to some parts of his private character and affairs; but if he pretends to retort the joke, you insult, abuse, and bellow against him as an impudent fellow who fails in his respect to the Court.—It was in this manner you behaved to my first witness, whom you first provoked into a passion by injurious insinuations; then you took an advantage of the confusion which you had entailed upon him; and lastly, you insulted him as a person who had shuffled in his evidence. This might have been an irreparable injury to the character of a tradesman, had not he been luckily known to the whole jury, and many other persons in Court, as a man of unquestioned probity and credit. Sir, a witness has as good a title as you have to the protection of the Court; and ought to have more, because evidence is absolutely necessary for the investigation of truth; whereas, the aim of a lawyer is often to involve it in doubt and obscurity. Is it for this purpose you so frequently deviate from the point, and endeavour to raise the mirth of the audience with flat jokes and insipid similes? or, have you really so miserably mistaken your own talents, as to set up for the character of a man of humour?—For my own part, were I disposed to be merry, I should never desire a more pregnant subject of ridicule, than your own appearance and behaviour; but, as I am at present in a very serious mood, I shall content myself with demanding adequate reparation for the injurious treatment I have received at your hands; otherwise I will in four days put this letter in the press, and you shall hear in another manner—not from a ruffian and an assassin—but from an injured gentleman, who is not ashamed of subscribing himself.”

Some account of Mr. Mackercher, “the melting Scot,” is given in *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*. He is well known, from the part he took in supporting the pretensions of Mr. Annesley, who claimed the Angle-

sea title and estate. Smollett seems, by the following note, to have occasionally assisted him in his distress.

"I am much mortified that my rascally situation will not at present permit me to send more than the trifle inclosed, as nothing could give me more pleasure than an opportunity of shewing with how much friendship and esteem I am, &c."

In 1755, he published a new translation of *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote, from the Spanish of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra; with some account of the Author's Life: Illustrated with 28 new Copperplates, designed by Hayman, and engraved by the best artists*, in 2 vols. 4to. This translation was undertaken in dependence upon the encouragement of a subscription; and was executed, as it was supposed, with a very slender knowledge of the Spanish language, a circumstance that exposed him to much abuse. He informs us, in a short *Advertisement*, that his aim in this undertaking, was to maintain that ludicrous solemnity, and self-importance, by which the inimitable *Cervantes* has distinguished the character of *Don Quixote*, without raising him to the insipid rank of a dry philosopher, or debasing him to the melancholy circumstances and unentertaining caprice of an ordinary madman; and to preserve the native humour of *Sancho Panza* from degenerating into mere proverbial phlegm, or affected buffoonery; that he has endeavoured to retain the spirit and ideas, without servilely adhering to the literal expressions of the original, from which, however, he has not so far deviated, as to destroy that formality of idiom so peculiar to the Spaniards, and so essential to the character of the work; that the satire and propriety of many of the allusions which had been lost in the change of customs and lapse of time, is restored in explanatory notes; and the whole conducted with that care and circumspection which ought to be exerted by every author, who, in attempting to improve upon a task already performed, subjects himself to the most invidious comparison.

If it should be thought that all those advantages have not been attained by the translator, it ought to be remembered, that *Don Quixote* is the most difficult book

in the world to translate, from the extreme frequency of its idiomatic phrases; that few of even the Spaniards of the present day understand all its beauties, or can explain the obscurities which the lapse of time has occasioned; and that to transfuse all the spirit of *Cervantes*, his fine humour, and the beauty of his numerous allusions, into a foreign language, is a task which a genius equal to that of the inimitable author himself could not perform, without the same knowledge of the country and of the times in which he lived; including also the most extensive acquaintance with the language, idioms, customs, humorous expressions, provincial phrases, and proverbial sayings of the people for whom the translation is intended.

Since, therefore, the best translation of *Don Quixote* we can look for, must be executed by a person possessed of a genius a-kin to the author, and chiefly qualified by books, a better than Smollett's, upon the whole, cannot be expected to appear in our language. The version of *Jarvis*, the painter, may, in some respects, be thought more exact, but it is less spirited and elegant. The genius of Smollett comes nearest to the great original; though it fails him in preserving the formality of the Spanish idiom. In this respect, he is surpassed by *Motteux*, his inferior in genius; who, under the burlesque veil of farcical disguise, in which he sometimes envelops the author, displays the ludicrous solemnity of *Don Quixote*, and the native humour of *Sancho Panza*, with more felicity of expression and propriety of allusion. *Motteux's* translation fell in the way of the present writer when he was very young, and on that account, perhaps, it made a deeper impression, and appeared more worthy of attention than it really is; yet, he doubts not but many readers who take up an *English Don Quixote*, merely to be diverted, will pronounce *Motteux's* the best book.

On the comparative merits of the translations of *Don Quixote*, by *Motteux*, *Jarvis*, and Smollett, he is happy to coincide in opinion with the ingenious author of a late "Essay on the Principles of Translation." His comparison between *Motteux* and Smollett, with some

exceptions in favour of the latter, is excellent, and, though long, is too valuable to be withheld.

"*Smollett* inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accommodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt, alternately, the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vulgar. To these qualifications, he joined an inventive genius, and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the composition of original works of the same species with the novel of *Cervantes*; so it is not perhaps possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that novel.

"*Motteux*, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character, a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems likewise to have had a great command of the various styles which are accommodated to the expression both of grave burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to *Smollett* in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of *Don Quixote*. It may, therefore, be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be decided. It would have been so, had *Smollett* confided in his own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required: but *Smollett* too often wrote in such circumstances, that dispatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. *Jarvis* could give him faithfully the sense of his author: and it was necessary only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with *Motteux*, *Smollett* found it necessary to assume the armour of *Jarvis*. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with *Motteux*, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses

in his preface of having 'taken his version wholly from the French.' We find, therefore, both in the translation of Jarvis, and that of Smollett, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied rejection of the phraseology of Motteux. Now Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a licence, both in adding to, and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has, upon the whole, a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms, he has been eminently fortunate; and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has, in general, preoccupied the appropriated phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in general, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver Smollett, who, by thus absurdly rejecting what his own judgment and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux *."

In 1756, he made a journey to Scotland, to visit his mother, then residing with her daughter, Mrs. Telfer, at Scotstoun, in Peeblesshire, where he passed some time in the gratification of the fine feelings of affection and gratitude, which occupied so large a portion of his heart.

This year he began the *Critical Review*, or *Annals of Literature*, which he conducted, with much ability, till 1763, but with too much sensibility, when any of the unfortunate authors, whose works he had, it may be, justly censured, attempted to retaliate, and with a degree of acrimony that involved him in a variety of disputes. The most serious in its consequence, was his dispute with Admiral Knowles, who had published a pamphlet in defence of his conduct in the expedition to Rochfort, 1758. On this performance he was so particularly and unguardedly severe, that the Admiral commenced a prosecution against the printer; declaring, at the same time, that his only reason for commencing an action, was to know the real author, and, if a gentleman, to insist on satisfaction. In this affair he behaved with prudence and spirit. Desirous of compro-

* Professor Tytler's Essay on the Principles of Translation, p. 178-184.

ming the dispute with the Admiral, in an amicable manner, he applied to his friend Mr. Wilkes, in the following letter, dated Chelsea, March 24. 1759, to interpose his good offices with his opponent.

"*Ecce iterum Crispinus.*—Your generosity with respect to Johnson *, shall be the theme of our applause and thanksgiving. I shall be very proud to find myself comprehended in your league, offensive and defensive; nay, I consider myself already as a contracting party, and have recourse to the assistance of my allies. It is not, I believe, unknown to you, that Admiral Knowles has taken exception at a paragraph in the *Critical Review* of last May, and commenced a prosecution against the printer. Now, whatever termination the trial may have, we shall infallibly be exposed to a considerable expence, and therefore I wish to see the prosecution quashed. Some gentlemen, who are my friends, have undertaken to find out, and talk with those who are supposed to have influence with the said Admiral; may I beg the same favour of you and your friends? The trial will come on in the beginning of May, and if the affair cannot be compromised, we intend to kick up a dust, and die hard. In a word, if that foolish Admiral has any regard to his own character, he will be quiet, rather than provoke farther the resentment of, &c."

The Admiral continued inflexible; and sentence was about to be pronounced against the printer, when Smollett gallantly stood forth, avowed himself the writer of the strictures in question, and offered the Admiral any satisfaction he might demand. The consequence was, that a prosecution was immediately commenced against him, and he was fined 100*l.* and sentenced to three months imprisonment in the King's Bench prison. His spirited conduct on this occasion, gained him much credit and applause.

His engagements in this publication likewise involved him in a dispute with Grainger, who thought himself injuriously treated in the account of his "*Translation of Tibullus*," in the *Critical Review* for December 1758, and

* Mr. Wilkes, at the intercession of Smollett, had procured the liberty of Dr. Johnson's servant, Francis Barber, who had been imprisoned.

published "A Letter to Tobias Smollett, M.D. occasioned by his criticism upon a late translation of Tibullus, 8vo," 1758, in which he proves, by examples principally taken from the criticism on his own work, that the Editors of the *Critical Review* had broken, in every particular, their promises solemnly made to the public in the plan of their journal; "that they would revive the true spirit of criticism; that they would never condemn or extol, without having first carefully perused the performance; that they would never act under the influence of connection or prejudice; that they would not venture to criticize a translation without understanding the original; that they would never wrest the sense, or misinterpret the meaning of any author; that they would never, without reluctance, disapprove even of a bad writer who had the least title to indulgence; and that they would not exhibit a partial and unfair assemblage of the blemishes of any production."

On the publication of the "Rosciad," Churchill, imagining Smollett the author of the offensive review of that performance, retaliated, with great spirit, in the "Apology to the Critical Reviewers."

Whence could arise this mighty critic spleen,
The Muse a trisler, and her theme so mean?
What had I done, that angry heaven should send
The bitterest foe where most I wish'd a friend?
Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
And hail'd the honours of thy matchless fame.
For me let hoary *Fielding* bite the ground,
So nobler *Pickle* stand superbly bound.
From *Livy*'s temples tear th' historic crown,
Which, with more justice, blooms upon thine own, &c.

It appears, however, Churchill was mistaken in his suspicion; for Smollett, hearing that Mr. Colman had also accused him of having made an attack on his moral character in the *Critical Review*, he exculpated himself from the charge, in the following letter to Garrick, dated Chelsea, April 5. 1761.

"I see Mr. Colman has taken offence at the article in the *Critical Review* which treats of the "Rosciad," and I understand he suspected me to be the author of that article. Had he asked me the question, I should have

freely told him I was not the author of the offensive article, and readily contributed to any decent scheme which might have been proposed for his satisfaction: But as he has appealed to the public, I shall leave him and the real author to settle the affair between themselves, and content myself with declaring to you, and that upon my honour, that I did not write one word of the article upon the "Rosciad," and that I have no ill will nor envy to Mr. Colman, whom I have always respected as a man of genius, and whose genius I shall always be ready and pleased to acknowledge either in private or in public. I envy no man of merit; and I can safely say I do not even repine at the success of those who have no merit. I am old enough to have seen and observed that we are all play-things of fortune, and that it depends upon something as insignificant and precarious as the tossing up of a halfpenny, whether a man rises to affluence and honours, or continues to his dying day struggling with the difficulties and disgraces of life. I desire to live quietly with all mankind, and, if possible, to be upon good terms with all those who have distinguished themselves by their merit. I must own that if I had examined the article upon the "Rosciad" before it was sent to the press, I should have put my negative upon some expressions in it, though I cannot see in it any reflection to the prejudice of Mr. Colman's moral character; but I have been so hurried since my enlargement that I had not time to write one article in the *Critical Review*, except that upon *Bower's History*, and perhaps I shall not write another these six months. That hurry, and a bad state of health, have prevented me from returning in person the visit you favoured me with in the King's Bench. I beg you will accept this letter in lieu of it, and believe me that no man respects Mr. Garrick more than he is respected by his obliged humble servant, &c."

Besides these, many other disputes arose with different writers, who considered themselves injured by the severity of his criticisms. Seldom a month passed without some complaints on that head, and those not often couched in the most decent terms. But whatever reason he had

to complain on that account, he afterwards found that the revenge of an author was nothing compared to the rancour of the politician.

In 1757, his comedy of *The Reprisal; or, the Tars of Old England*, an after-piece of two acts, was performed at Drury-Lane theatre, and met with success, yet not equal to what its merit might have justly claimed. He acknowledged himself "highly obliged for the friendly care of Mr. Garrick, exerted in preparing it for the stage, and still more for his acting the part of Lusignan, in "Zara," for his benefit, on the sixth, instead of the ninth night, to which he was only entitled by the custom of the theatre." Being informed that attempts had been made to embroil him on this occasion with Garrick, he justified himself from the imputation of having spoken disrespectfully of him, by the following letter:—

"Understanding from Mr. Derrick, that some officious people have circulated reports in my name, with a view to prejudice me in your opinion, I, in justice to myself, take the liberty to assure you, that if any person accuses me of having spoken disrespectfully of Mr. Garrick, of having hinted that he solicited for my farce, or had interested views in bringing it upon the stage, he does me wrong, upon the word of a gentleman. The imputation is altogether false and malicious. Exclusive of other considerations, I could not be such an idiot to talk in that strain, when my own interest required a different sort of conduct. Perhaps the same insidious methods have been taken to inflame former animosities, which, on my part, are forgotten and self-condemned. I must own you have acted in this affair of the farce, with that candour, openness, and cordiality, which even mortify my pride, while they lay me under the most sensible obligations; and I shall not rest satisfied until I have an opportunity to convince Mr. Garrick that my gratitude is at least as warm as any other of my passions. Meanwhile, I profess myself, &c."

In 1758, he gave to the world his *Complete History of England, deduced from the descent of Julius Cæsar, to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle*, 1748, in 4 vols. 4to. This work, it is said, he composed and prepared for the press,

in fourteen months; an effort to which his narrow circumstances might have directed him; but to which nothing but the most distinguished abilities, and the most vigorous application, could have been equal. It was reprinted the year following in 11 vols. 8vo, in weekly numbers, with engraved heads, and a *Dedication* to Pitt, then one of the Secretaries of State, and the idol of the nation. The sale, by the uncommon arts of publication made use of by the publishers, was very extensive, and he is said to have cleared 2000*l.* by it, and the *Continuation*, &c. which followed, in 4 vols. 8vo, 1762, and one vol. 8vo, 1765.

During his confinement in the King's Bench prison, he is said to have written his *Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*, a kind of English Quixote, in which he described some remarkable characters, then his fellow prisoners. This novel was first printed in the *British Magazine*, which he conducted in 1760 and 1761, and afterwards in 2 vols. 12mo, 1762.

When the Earl of Bute assumed the management of public affairs, in 1762, jealousy took the alarm, and raised a general outcry against the administration of the day. His promotion was attended with many unpopular measures, and great dissatisfaction arose among many orders of men. Party violence and civil discord diffused a dark cloud of implied suspicion, or open aversion, over the rising glories of a young and amiable prince, who had so lately ascended the throne of his ancestors, with the most enthusiastic attachment of his subjects. How justly the clamour was founded, is not for the present writer to determine. These circumstances have been attributed by some to weakness, by others to ill design in the administration, and by many, to the superior skill and versatility of their opponents, in forming parliamentary cabal, and fomenting popular discontent.

The new minister, happy in the smiles of his sovereign, whom he may be said to have cultivated from his cradle, but never possessing the confidence of the people, found it necessary to employ some able writers to palliate and defend the steps which had led to his advancement. Smollett, among others, was engaged; and he entered on

the arduous task appointed for him with great spirit. In defence of his patron, he began a weekly paper called *The Briton*, in conjunction with other literary retainers to the minister; but, being offended at some behaviour in his friends, he relinquished it with disgust. The first number of *The Briton*, the suspicious vehicle of praise undeserved, and misplaced panegyric, appeared May 29th 1762, and was followed, on the other side, by the famous "North Briton," written by Mr. Wilkes; which, at last, by the force of elegant invective and sound argument, and unwarrantable rashness of the minister, who violated in his person the principles of the English constitution, completely defeated its opponent, and dissolved the friendship which had lately subsisted between the authors of the respective performances. Two months before the first number of *The Briton* appeared, Smollett wrote the following letter to Mr. Wilkes, dated Chelsea, March 28th 1762.

"My warmest regard, affection and attachment, you have long ago secured. My secrecy you may depend upon*. When I presume to differ from you, in any point of opinion, I shall always do it with diffidence and deference. I have been ill these three months, but hope soon to be in a condition to pay my respects to Mr. Wilkes in person. Meanwhile, I must beg leave to trouble him with another packet, which he will be so good as to correct at his leisure. That he may continue to enjoy his happy flow of spirits, and proceed through life with a flowing sail of prosperity, is the wish, and the hope, and the confident expectation of &c."

The Briton was laid down, Feb. 12. 1763; and, on the 8th April following, the nobleman, in whose defence it was set on foot, finding the stream of popular discontent too strong to be resisted, resigned his office of First Lord of the Treasury, which had excited so much envy and clamour, and passed the remaining part of his days in philosophic ease and tranquillity. Whatever his deserts may be, it is certain that the tribute of public applause was never paid to his merits. To this moment we feel

* Relative to Mr. Wilkes's Observations on the Spanish Papers.

the fatal effects of the early prejudices conceived against him.

After Lord Bute seceded from his ostensible situation in a ministry, which the strong arm of military interposition was scarcely able to protect, Smollett is said to have experienced neglect from that nobleman, who had, in many instances, been found a generous patron of men of inferior importance and ability.

The neglect of his patron, and the uncomfortable state of public affairs, made a deep impression on his mind; and this, united to a sedentary life, and assiduous application to study, having impaired his health, which had been weakly from his infancy, he went abroad, with a view to re-establish it, in June 1763, and continued in France and Italy for about two years.

He wrote an account of his *Travels through France and Italy*, in a series of letters to some friends, which were published in 2 vols. 8vo, 1766. In his first letter he mentions the motives that induced him to travel. "In gratifying your curiosity, I shall find some amusement to beguile the tedious hours, which, without some such employment, would be rendered unsupportable by distemper and disquiet. You knew and pitied my situation; traduced by malice, persecuted by faction, and overwhelmed by the sense of a domestic calamity which it was not in the power of fortune to repair." In the course of his travels, he appears to have laboured under a constant fit of chagrin; and his letters afford a melancholy proof of the influence of bodily distemper over the best disposition.

To this cynical relation of his *Travels*, Sterne is supposed to allude in the following passage of his "Sentimental Journey," Vol. I. p. 80. "The learned Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris—from Paris to Rome—and so on—but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured and distorted.—He wrote an account of them, but it was nothing but an account of his miserable feelings—I met Smelfungus in the grand portico of the Pantheon—he was just coming out of it—'It is nothing but a huge cock-pit,' said he,—'I wish you had said nothing worse

of the Venns Medicis,' replied I,—for in passing through Florence, I had heard he had fallen foul upon the goddess, and used her worse than a common strumpet, without the least provocation in nature.—I popped upon Smelfungus again at Turin, in his return home, and a sad tale of sorrowful adventures he had to tell, wherein he spoke of moving accidents by flood and field, and of the cannibals which each other eat: the Anthropophagi—He had been flayed alive, and bedeviled, and worse used than St. Bartholomew, at every stage he had come at—'I'll tell it,' said Smelfungus, 'to the world.'—'You had better tell it,' said I, 'to your physician.'

In 1769, he again entered the thorny paths of political discussion, and published his *Adventures of an Atom*, in 2 vols. 12mo; a political romance, supposed to be written in 1748, exhibiting, under *Japanese* names, the conduct and dissensions of the political parties in Great Britain, from the commencement of the French war in 1754, to the dissolution of Lord Chatham's administration in 1767-8. In this work he has found reason for altering his opinion of Lord Bute, as he did, in *The Continuation* of his History for changing his sentiments with regard to Pitt.

In 1770, his health being still in a declining state, he paid a visit to his native country, with the rational hope that air and exercise would restore him to his former health and vigour. He arrived at Edinburgh in the latter end of June, and, after spending a few days with his mother, set out for Inveraray, accompanied by Mrs. Telfer, and resided a short time with his cousin, James Smollett, Esq. of Bonhill, at his house of Cameron.

In 1771, not long after his return from Scotland, where his complaints appear to have met with but little alleviation, he published his *Expedition of Humpbry Glinker*, in 3 vols. 12mo, in which, under the character of *Matthew Bramble*, he inserted the observations he made on revisiting his native country, and the scenes of infancy. The remarks which introduce his fine *Ode to Leven Water*, deserve particular attention.

"The water of Leven, though nothing near so considerable as the Clyde, is much more transparent, pas-

toral, and delightful. This charming stream is the outlet of Lochlomond, and, through a tract of four miles, pursues its winding course, murmuring over a bed of pebbles, till it joins the Frith at Dumbarton. A very little above its source, on the lake, stands the house of Cameron, belonging to Mr. Smollett, so embosomed in oak wood, that we did not see it till we were within fifty yards of the door. The lake approaches on one side to within six or seven yards of the window. It might have been placed in a higher site, which would have afforded a more extensive prospect and a drier atmosphere; but this imperfection is not chargeable on the present proprietor, who purchased it ready built, rather than be at the trouble of repairing his own family house of Bonhill, which stands two miles from hence, on the Leven, so surrounded with plantations, that it used to be known by the name of the Mavis (or thrush) Nest. I have seen the Lago di Gardi, Albano de Vico, Bolsena, and Geneva, and I prefer Lochlomond to them all; a preference which is certainly owing to the verdant islands that seem to float upon its surface, affording the most enchanting objects of repose to the excursive view. Nor are the banks destitute of beauties which even partake of the sublime. On this side they display a sweet variety of woodland, corn-field, and pasture, with several agreeable villas, emerging, as it were, out of the lake; till at some distance, the prospect terminates in huge mountains, covered with heath, which, being in the bloom, affords a very rich covering of purple. Every thing here is romantic beyond imagination. This country is justly styled the Arcadia of Scotland: I do not doubt but it may vie with Arcadia in every thing but climate. I am sure it excels it in verdure, wood and water. What say you to a natural basin of pure water, near thirty miles long, and, in some places, seven miles broad, and in many above a hundred fathom deep, having four and twenty habitable islands, some of them stocked with deer, and all of them covered with wood, containing immense quantities of delicious fish, salmon, pike, trout, perch, flounders, eels and powans, the last a delicate kind of fresh-water herring peculiar to this

lake; and finally communicating with the sea, by sending off the Leven, through which all those species (except the powan) make their exit and entrance occasionally.

"Inclosed I send you the copy of a little *Ode* to this river by *Dr. Smollett*, who was born on the banks of it, within two miles of the place where I am now writing. It is at least picturesque and accurately descriptive, if it has no other merit. There is an idea of truth in an agreeable landscape taken from nature, which pleases me more than the gayest fiction which the most luxuriant fancy can display."

This was the last publication he gave to the world.

With a view once more to try the effects of a warmer climate, he returned to Italy, and died near Leghorn, October 21. 1771, in the 51st year of his age.

After his death, his name appeared to a translation of *Telemachus*, in 2 vols. 12mo, 1776. His name likewise appeared to a translation of *Gil Blas*, in 4 vols. 12mo; and, in conjunction with *Dr. Franklin*, to a translation of *Voltaire's Prose Works*, in 27 vols. 8vo, 1763; but little of it was done by his own hand; he only revised it, and added a few notes. He was employed during the last years of his life, in preparing a new edition of the *Ancient and Modern Universal History*, great part of which he had originally written himself, particularly the *History of France, Italy, and Germany*. He wrote and compiled, besides, a number of works for the booksellers, to which his name does not appear.

Of the domestic life of *Smollett*, the little that is known does not exhibit a picture of happiness. He married *Miss Lascelles*, a lady from Jamaica, by whom he had a daughter whom he tenderly loved. The death of this daughter, which happened a short time before he went abroad in 1763, made an impression on his mind which he never perfectly recovered.

To add to the regret which every reader of sensibility must feel at the untoward circumstances which attended him through life, his widow was left friendless in a foreign country. To relieve her from some temporary

distress, the tragedy of "Venice Preserved" was performed at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, March 3. 1784, for her benefit, and the money remitted to Italy.

On this occasion, Houston Stewart Nicholson, Esq. of Carnock, appeared in the part of Pierre; and the following prologue was spoken by Mr. Woods, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, said to be written by Professor Richardson of Glasgow, author of "Poems chiefly Rural," and other ingenious and elegant performances.

Though letter'd Rome, and polish'd Greece could boast
The splendid table, and the courteous host,—
The rites to strangers due;—though poets sing
This mighty warrior, or that powerful king,
The wand'rer's friend—yet still, whate'er is told
By modern poets, or by bards of old,
Is rivall'd here;—for here, with joy, we see
The heart-felt bliss of heav'nly charity!
See her, with rapture, spread her willing hands,
And throw her blessings into foreign lands;
Dry up the tear she never saw to flow,
And eager catch the distant sigh of woe.
In vain seas swell, and mountains rise in vain—
A widow's groans are heard across the main;
—A widow, now!—Alas! how chang'd the day!—
Once the NARCISSA* of your poet's lay;
Now, fatal change! (of ev'ry bless bereft,
Nor child, nor friend, nor kind protector left),
Spreads on a distant shore her scanty board,
And humbly takes what strangers can afford.
Yet link'd to you by ev'ry tender tie,
To you she lifts the long-dejected eye,
And thus she speaks—"Who dar'd, with manly rage,
" To lash the vices of an impious age †?
" Who dar'd to seize the bold historic pen,
" Paint living kings, and ministers, as men ‡?
" Who sung sad Scotia's hapless sons forlorn,
" Her broken peace, her sweetest laurels torn ¶?
" Or who, on oaten reed, by Leven's side,
" Sung the fair stream, and hail'd the dimpling tide ||?
" Or who?—say he, for such, I'm sure, are here,
" Whose honest bosoms never yet knew fear;
" Sons of the north, who stem corruption's tide **,
" Your country's honour, and your nation's pride—
" Lords of the lion heart and eagle eye,
" Who heed no storm that howls along the sky—
" Say ye—whose lyre, to manly numbers strung,
" The glorious bliss of Independence sung ††?

* Her fictitious name in Roderick Random.

† "Advice and Reproof," a satire.

‡ The History of England.

¶ Ode, 1746, beginning, "Mourn happy Calceolus, mourn."

|| Ode to Leven Water.

** Alluding to the opposition given by the northern counties to the corruption of seditious votes.

†† Ode to Independence.

" Who felt that pow'r, and still ador'd his shrine?—
 " It was your SMOLLETT! Oh! he once was mine!"
 Tears stopp'd her utterance, else she would have said,
 " Like him be bold, in virtue undismay'd;
 " Let Independence all your actions guide,
 " Your surest patron, and your noblest pride."

Soon after his death, a monument was erected to his memory, near Leghorn, by his wife, with the following inscription, written by his friend Armstrong; in a strain of energetic elegance, sorrow, and manly indignation.

Hic ossa conduntur
 TOBIAS SMOLLETT, Scoti;
 Qui, profapia generosa et antiqua natus,
 Præfixæ virtutis exemplar emicuit;
 Aspectu ingenuo,
 Corpore valido,
 Pectore animoso,
 Indole apprime benigna,
 Et fere supra facultates munificis,
 Insignis.
 Ingenio feraci, faceto, versatili.
 Omnigenæ fere doctrinæ mire capaci,
 Varia fabularum dulcedine
 Vitam moresque hominum,
 Ubertate summa ludens, depinxit.
 Adverso, interim, nefas! tali tantoque alumno,
 Nisi quo satyræ opipare supplebat,
 Seculo impio, ignavo, fatuo,
 Quo musæ vix nisi nothæ
 Mæcenatibus Britannicis
 Fovebantur.
 In memoriam
 Optimi et amabilis omnino viri,
 Per multis amicis desiderati,
 Hocce marmor,
 Dilectissima simul et amantissima conjux
 L. M.
 Sacravit.

Translation.

Here
 Rest the remains
 of
 TOBIAS SMOLLETT,
 A North Briton,
 Who sprung
 From an ancient and respectable family,
 Shone forth an example
 Of the virtues of former times.
 Of an ingenuous countenance,
 And manly make.
 With a breast animated by the justest spirit,

THE LIFE OF SMOLLETT.

35

He was eminently distinguished
For great benevolence of temper,
And a generosity even above his fortune.

His wit had every character
Of fertile inventiveness,
Of true pleasantry,
Of flexibility to every subject,
From his aptness and wonderful capacity
For every kind of learning.

The exercise of these talents
Produced a variety of pleasing fictions,
In which,

With great exuberance of fancy,
And true humour,

He laughed at, and described
The lives and manners of men:

While,
(Shameful to relate!)

This genius,

This honour to his country,
Met with nothing

In these abandoned, worthless, insipid times,
But what was unfavourable to him,

Except indeed

Their abundance of supply to his pen
Of matter of satire:

Times!

In which

Hardly any literary merit,
But such as was in the most false or futile taste,
Received any encouragement

From the paltry mock Mæcenases of Britain;

In honour to the memory

Of this most worthy and amiable

Member of society,

Sincerely regretted by many friends,

This monument

Was, by his much beloved and affectionate wife,

Dutifully and deservedly

Consecrated.

In 1774, a pillar was erected to his memory on the banks of the Leven, by his cousin, James Smollett, Esq. of Bonhill, with the following nervous and classical inscription, part of which proceeded from the manly, forcible, and energetic pen of Dr. Johnson.

Siste viator!

Si lepores ingenique venam benignam,

Si morum callidissimum pictorem,

Unquam es miratus,

Immorare paululum memorie

TOBIE SMOLLETT, M. D.

Viri virtutibus hisce

Quas in homine et cive

C ij

THE LIFE OF SMOLLETT.

Et laudes et imiteris,
 Haud mediocriter ornati:
 Qui in literis variis versatus,
 Postquam felicitate sibi propria,
 Sese posteris commendaverat,
 Morte acerba raptus
 Anno ætatis 51
 Eheu! quam procul a patria!
 Prope Liburni portum in Italia,
 Jacet sepultus.
 Tali tantoque viro, patrueli suo,
 Cui in decursu Lampada
 Se potius tradidisse decuit,
 Hanc Columnam,
 Amoris, eheu! inane monumentum
 In ipsis Levinæ ripis,
 Quas versiculis sub exitu vitæ illustratas,
 Primis infans vagitibus personuit,
 Ponendam curavit
 JACOBUS SMOLLETT de Bonhill.
 Abi et reminiscere,
 Hoc quidem honore,
 Non modo defuncti memoriæ,
 Verum etiam exemplo, prospectum esse;
 Aliis enim, si modo digni sint,
 Idem erit virtutis præmium!

Translation.

Stop, traveller!
 If pleasing amiable manners,
 A rich and agreeable vein of wit,
 A happy talent for exhibiting pictures of life and manners,
 Ever commanded your admiration,
 Here,
 Let reflection fix your thoughts
 on
 TOBIAS SMOLLETT, M. D.
 One more than commonly endued with those virtues
 Which, in a man, and a citizen,
 You would praise, or imitate.
 Who,
 Having secured the applause
 Of posterity,
 By a variety of literary abilities,
 And a peculiar felicity of composition,
 Was,
 By a rapid and cruel distemper,
 Snatched from this world in the 51st year of his age.
 Far, alas! from his country
 He lies interred near Leghorn, in Italy.
 In testimony of his many and great virtues
 This empty monument,
 The only pledge, alas! of his affection,
 Is erected
 On the banks of the Leven,
 The scene of his birth and of his latest poetry,

By JAMES SMOLLETT, of Bonhill,
His cousin;

Who should rather have expected this last tribute from him.
Go, and remember

This honour was given alone to the memory of the deceased,
But, for the encouragement of others,
Deserve, like him, and be alike rewarded.

His *History of England*, with the *Continuation*, has been frequently reprinted since his death, in 16 vols. 8vo. A new edition of the *Continuation*, from the revolution to the death of George II. as a supplement to Hume, was printed in 8 vols. 8vo, 1791, with alterations. The common editions of his novels, particularly of *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Humphry Clinker*, are too numerous to be specified. His *Plays and Poems*, were collected by T. Evans, Bookseller in the Strand, in one volume 12mo, 1784. His *Miscellaneous Works*, consisting of his Plays, Poems, and Novels (except the *Adventures of an Atom*,) were collected by Mr. David Ramsay, the judicious and well-informed printer of "The Edinburgh Evening Courant," in 6 vols. 8vo, 1790, with humorous frontispieces by Rowlandson. His *Poetical Works* were collected, by the present writer, in the 10th vol. of "The Works of the British Poets," in 13 vols. 8vo, 1793-5, with a "Biographical and Critical Preface," which is reprinted here, corrected and enlarged.

The character of Smollett has been fondly, and not inaccurately delineated in the *Epitaph* on his monument near Leghorn, and the *Inscription* on the pillar erected to his memory on the banks of the Leven. In the dedication of *Count Fatbom* to Dr. — by which he meant himself, he has drawn his own character. His manner of living is described in *Humphry Clinker*, where young *Melford* is supposed to dine with him at his house in Chelsea.

"He carried me to dine with S——, whom you and I have long known by his writings. He lives in the skirts of the town, and every Sunday his house is open to all unfortunate brothers of the quill. I was civilly received, in a plain, yet decent habitation, which opened into a very pleasant garden, kept in order; and, indeed, I

saw none of the outward signs of authorship, either in the house or the landlord, who is one of the few writers of the age that stand upon their own foundation, without patrimony, and above dependence. By all accounts S—— is not without weakness and caprice, but he is certainly good-humoured and civilized; nor do I find that there is any thing overbearing in his disposition."

In his person and manners, Smollett was fashioned to prepossess all men in his favour. His figure was graceful and handsome; and in his air and manner, there was a dignity that commanded respect, joined with a benignity that inspired affection. With the most polished manners, and the finest address, he possessed a loftiness and elevation of sentiment and character, without pride or haughtiness. His general behaviour bore the genuine stamp of true politeness, the result of an overflowing humanity and goodness of heart. He was a man of upright principles, and of great and extensive benevolence. He not only embraced, but sought and created occasions of doing good. He was the reliever of the distressed, the protector of the helpless, and the encourager of merit. His conversation was sprightly and agreeable. In the domestic relations, his conduct was tender, affectionate and exemplary. In his opinions of mankind, he was candid and liberal. To those who were above him he allowed the due superiority. To his equals and inferiors, he behaved with ease and affability, without the insolence of familiarity, or the parade of condescension. With his amiable qualities and agreeable manners, he united courage and independence. In the declaration of his opinions, he was open; in his actions, he was intrepid. No danger could prevent him from saying or doing those things which he conceived in themselves to be right, and in their consequences to be useful to his friends or to his country. He had been bred a Tory, and generally adhered to the principles of that party; but he had a sincere love for his country, and a diffusive benevolence for the whole human race. His experience in the world inflamed his hatred against vice and corruption, in proportion to his love of virtue, and zeal for the public good; and he

thought it no violation of charity to stigmatize vice, profligacy, and hypocrisy. But in his support of persons and measures, he sometimes considered only the persons and measures, without taking other objects and relations into the account. He was more frequently influenced by personal attachment, and hurried on by present impulse, than guided by comparative views of real advantage, examined by impartial reason. His opposition to the great, often, in its warmth, exceeded the importance of the object. He was occasionally misled by a heated imagination, strong resentments, and the mortification of disappointed hopes, into bitterness and party virulence, long kept alive by the indecent and irritating provocations of triumphant adversaries. Under these impressions, his descriptions, as an *historian*, were often distorted, and his decisions, as a *critic*, on the literary productions of some of his contemporaries, were sometimes unwarrantably warped by narrow prejudices, and expressed in the harsh terms of coarse contempt. Whatever end he pursued, he followed with an eagerness that was not necessary to compass it. The defects in his temperament, natural or habitual, made him unprosperous and unhappy. His sensibility was too ardent; his passions were too easily moved. His candour frequently became credulity; his liberality often subjected him to deception. His favours were generally bestowed on the most undeserving of those who had recourse to his assistance; not so much from want of discernment, as want of resolution; for he had not fortitude enough to resist the importunity of even the most worthless. In friendship, he was ardent and steady; but in the latter part of his life, he sometimes very feelingly bewailed the treachery and perfidy he had experienced in consequence of the mistaken connections he had formed, and to which every man of warm attachments will be exposed. In the practice of physic, for want of suppleness and perseverance, he never was eminent. As an author, he was not so successful as his happy genius and acknowledged merit certainly deserved. His connections were extensive, and his friends numerous and respectable. He was intimately acquainted with the most eminent of his poeti-

cal and literary contemporaries. He was respected by the world as a man of superior talents, wit, and learning. But he never acquired a patron among the great, who, by his favour or beneficence, relieved him from the necessity of writing for a subsistence. Book-fellers may be said to have been his only patrons, and from them he had constant employment, in translating, compiling, and reviewing. Without doubt, he made a great deal of money by his writings; and had he been a rigid economist, and endowed with the gift of retention, he might have lived and died very independent. But his difficulties, whatever they were, proceeded not from ostentation or extravagance. He was hospitable, but not ostentatiously so; and his table was plentiful, but not extravagant. An irritable and impatient temper was his greatest failing; but, making due allowance for a spirit wounded by ingratitude, and irritated by the malignant shafts of envy, dulness, and profligacy, it would be difficult to name a man so respectable for the excellencies of his mind, or amiable for the virtues of his heart.

The predominant excellencies of his intellect were, fertility of invention, vigorous sense, brilliant fancy, and versatile humour. His understanding was quick and penetrating, his imagination was fertile, his memory retentive, and his humour original. He shows in his writings that he was intimately acquainted with Greek and Roman literature, and had studied, with success, the various branches of modern learning. He was well versed in the history and politics of Europe, and in the constitution of his country. The principal subject of his inquiry, was the human character; and, in his literary career, the representation of life and manners, his principal object. Man he surveyed with the most accurate observation. His understanding, acute and vigorous, was well fitted for diving into the human mind. His humour, lively and versatile, could paint justly and agreeably what he saw. He possessed a rapid and clear conception, with an animated and graceful style. His observations on life and manners, are commonly just, strong, and comprehensive, and his reasoning generally

found and conclusive. His perceptions of beauty are vivid and distinct, his feelings ardent, his taste correct. His humour, though lively and pungent, is not, perhaps, equal in strength and elegance to that of Congreve, Fielding, and Swift. In chastity and delicacy, it is certainly inferior to that of Addison, but equal in purity and moral tendency, to that of his contemporary, Fielding. It is keen, sprightly, variegated, and founded on truth. It exposes successfully, folly, hypocrisy, impropriety, and such vices as are objects of ridicule. To trace the latent sources of human actions, and to develop the various incongruities of conduct arising from them, was the favourite bent of his mind, as it was of Theophrastus, Bruyere, Moliere, Fielding, and others; and, in describing objects of this kind, whether in the way of fabulous narration or dramatic composition, he is so peculiarly happy, that, as a humorous and pleasant painter of life and manners, he has reflected the highest honour on the place of his nativity, and must ever be considered by his country, among the first of her sons in literary reputation.

As an author, Smollett has distinguished himself as an *historian*, a *novelist*, a *journalist of travels*, a *dramatist*, and a *poet*; and must be acknowledged to have made a considerable addition to the general stock of elegant and useful literature.

As an *historian*, he ranks among the most pleasing, though not among the most profound writers of our nation who have exercised their abilities in historical composition. When his *History of England* appeared, Hume had not given to the world his narrative of the earlier events of English story, which must be considered as the commencement of his ingenious apology for the families of Tudor and Stuart; and the greater discernment or superior frivolity of the age had almost consigned to oblivion, Carte and Brady, Oldmixon and Rapin. The public were in want of a concise, yet full, a faithful, yet animated history of England; and he had the satisfaction of observing, that his performance was received with general approbation, and read with much greater pleasure and improvement than the dull unaffecting nar-

rations of preceding writers. Considering the time and circumstances in which it was written, it is, indeed, a great effort of genius and application. Without entering into a minute detail of obscure, disagreeable, and uninteresting events, he has contented himself with a concise and animated abridgment of the barbarous periods, and has only enlarged upon subjects that are important and instructive. In dignity of historical composition, and profoundness of philosophical research, he is inferior to Hume; but in felicity of sentiment, description, and expression, he may safely contend with the most illustrious of his predecessors. In the pages of Smollett, we do not find so many applications of philosophical inquiry to the investigation of facts, as in those of Thucydides or Xenophon, Sallust or Tacitus, Hume or Gibbon; but he has exhibited specimens of picturesque narration and elegant expression, little inferior to any which the pencil of Livy has sketched, or the pen of Robertson has composed. We do not find the industry of the antiquary joined with the fire of imagination, and the majesty and elegance of diction; but a Robertson is an uncommon person; nor ought we to be offended at the want of an union which cannot ordinarily be expected. Instead of searching, with indefatigable labour, into every record that can be met with, settling doubtful points with accuracy, bringing to light the most hidden facts, he seems principally solicitous to adorn and render the most important events acceptable, by communicating them in a graceful manner to the world. As the soul of history is truth, it were indeed greatly to be wished that he had been at as much pains to procure authentic information, as he has been to obtain the reputation of a classic writer. In this last respect he has all possible merit; but his narration is not so much distinguished for the fidelity and diligence with which it is written, as for beauty of composition. It is a hasty and indigested performance; too voluminous for an abridgment, and too imperfect for an history. It abounds with prejudices and misrepresentations, which no lover of liberty can forgive, and no force of genius or beauty of language can atone for. His partiality for the Tory party is ma-

nifest in almost every page ; and, in stating the arguments which passed on any subject, he generally relates those only which were urged on one side ; which unavoidably creates a suspicion of his partiality. His reflections, in many instances, are highly exceptionable ; and in many places he seems to be inconsistent with himself, and to argue against his own principles. At one time he appears the sanguine friend of liberty, and applauds all opposition against the stretches of prerogative ; and yet, at another, he censures the resentment which the parliament expressed against such encroachments. In his account of the methods used to extinguish the rebellion, 1745, he has lavished all the powers of the pathos in laboured descriptions of horror : but he seems more solicitous to say what is brilliant and striking, than what is just and authentic. In describing characters, which is supposed to be his great excellence, he appears to have taken fancy rather than truth for his guide. His character of Queen Mary is inaccurate and injurious ; and that of King William, is, in many respects, falsified by the circumstances of his life. The great excellence of his work, is the elegance and spirit of the style, which is, in general, nervous, clear, fluent, bold, and florid ; and the reader, who is content with acquiring only a general knowledge of our history, cannot be more agreeably instructed ; for his manner of writing is so entertaining, that attention seldom sleeps over his pages. But he has not performed the duties of an historical writer with sufficient care, accuracy, and impartiality. His imagination overpowers his judgment ; and he is tempted to employ his powers in the vain glow of colouring, and is more studious to dazzle the imagination with a gaudy display of splendid ornaments, than to engage the understanding by just reasoning and solid reflections.

His *Continuation* is not more confused and inaccurate than such hasty productions unavoidably must be. A narrative which records recent events, and delineates living characters, scarce comes up to the idea we form of a history. The writer is most likely to adhere to veracity in his relation ; but we are not to expect all the freedom and impartiality we would wish to find in his comment upon men and measures. He who dares boldly to censure liv-

ing characters, and to expose the corrupt motives of their political conduct, may, perhaps, be thought to want prudence as a man; and he who is afraid to do either, may be deemed deficient in courage as an historian. Under such circumstances, Smollett has acquitted himself with no small degree of skill and address. If he has not been able to give all the light and information which history should afford; if he has not always expressed himself with that fearless spirit which distinguishes the unbiassed historian, he has avoided those prejudices and partial attachments which render his *History* liable to censure. In his reflections on public measures, he discovers intelligence and acuteness, without the affectation of sagacity; and, with respect to personal characters, he has not offered incense to the idols of popularity, nor heaped calumny on the victims of public aspersions. In his account of the parliamentary debates, he is extremely copious and interesting; but, in some instances, he deviates from the design, and stoops below the dignity of historical composition. In his portraiture of characters, though he must be acquitted of flattery and of malice, yet his fancy is not always under the due regulation of judgment. His painting is bold, glowing, and animated; yet it is sometimes necessary to write the name over the picture. The style is various, elegant, and forcible; yet it is not always correct, and is now and then too luxuriant and figurative. We cannot always applaud the rectitude of his judgment, nor the precision of his ideas; yet we seldom fail to admire his vivacity of sentiment and peculiar glow of description. In his reflections on the bill for the relief of debtors, he has drawn a description of a man of sentiment and sensibility labouring under the misery of imprisonment, which is so exquisitely pathetic, that it is impossible to read it without shedding tears of sympathy at every line. At the same time, he is greatly to be blamed for commemorating events too unimportant to fill the pages of history.

As a writer of that species of modern romance which has been denominated a *novel*, he is entitled to the praise of being one of the greatest that our nation has produced. He ranks with Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, the great masters of prosaic fiction; and though we cannot

say that he has surpassed them, he has entered into a noble competition. His novels exhibit a series of odd, extravagant, but natural pictures of life and manners, drawn with the descriptive fidelity of a Hogarth. He has painted the characters, and ridiculed the follies of life, with equal strength, humour, and propriety. The style is characterized by a just selection of appropriate terms and descriptive expressions; of "proper words in proper places." But he is not without faults. His characters are sometimes overcharged, his humour is often coarse, and he has exhibited some scenes which may corrupt a mind unseasoned by experience. His system of youthful profligacy, as exemplified in some of his libertines, is without excuse. Profligates, bullies, misanthropes, gamblers, and duellists, are among his favourite characters. His writings, however, are of a moral tendency; they have spirit, humour, and morality, and display the beauties of that genius which allures and rewards the attention of the discreet reader. Unguarded as they are in many of their representations, they are highly entertaining, and will always be read with pleasure.

His *Adventures of Roderick Random* is a novel of first rate merit. It is written in such a manner as to please all times and all people. It exhibits a natural, lively, and entertaining representation of the difficulties to which a friendless orphan is exposed, from his own want of experience, as well as from the selfishness, malice, and base indifference of mankind. The mean scenes in which he is involved, are described with true humour; and every reader finds entertainment in viewing those parts of life where the manners and passions are undisguised by affectation, ceremony, or education, and the whimsical peculiarities of disposition appear as nature has implanted them. The base purposes of hypocrisy, cant, selfish plausibility, cunning, and pretended friendship, are exposed in a masterly manner; and the inconsistencies that flow from the motley and repugnant qualities which are often whimsically blended together by the folly of men, are described with infinite humour and sagacity. Many of his characters are drawn from real life. The originals of *Gawkey*, *Strap*, *Crab*, *Potion*, *Oakbum*, *Whiffle*, *Mackbane*, and *Morgan*, were, in his own time, known and pointed

out: but short as the time is since the publication of this novel, it at present derives no advantage from that source, and owes its celebrity to its intrinsic merit alone. In describing sea characters, he is peculiarly happy. *Trumion*, *Hatebway*, and *Pipes*, of *Peregrine Pickle*, are highly finished originals; but *Lieutenant Bowling* exceeds them, and perhaps equals any character that has yet been painted by the happiest genius of ancient or modern times. This is indeed nature itself. As well as the ladder of promotion, his very name has long become proverbial for an honest blunt seaman, unacquainted with mankind, and the ways of the world. The moral tendency of the story none can deny. It is written with the purest intentions of promoting virtue, and correcting the ordinary follies of life. But in the accomplishment of this purpose, it is to be feared that scenes are laid open which it would be safer to conceal from youthful and inexperienced readers. The base purposes of fraud and duplicity are exposed; but a due attention to the common duties of life, decent deportment, purity of manners, and the appearance of morality and seriousness, are brought into discredit and suspicion. Such representations, it is to be feared, may be disadvantageous to early virtue; dear-bought experience having long convinced us, how very narrow the defiles between ridiculed rectitude and flagitious conduct.

His *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* relate, in language, by turns, easy, elegant, and pathetic, a succession of events, forming a natural and well-drawn picture of human life; which the thoughtless may peruse with advantage, and the prudent with emotions of triumph. From the wild unlucky boy, teasing his aunt and the commodore, and heading a rebellion at school against his master, we trace the headstrong youth, of pride unbroke, and unbridled appetite, plunging into folly, vice, and dissipation, wasting his substance, injuring the woman of all others he loved, and, at last, pining in prison. In this forlorn condition, detesting the world, abhorring himself, and loving *Emilia* to distraction, he protests to her brother, "that he had broke off all connections with mankind, and that he impatiently longed for the hour of his dissolution, which, if it should not soon arrive by the course of nature, he was resolved to hasten it with his

own hands, rather than be exposed to the contempt and more intolerable pity of a rascally world." He remains for some time obstinately bent on this frantic determination, notwithstanding the zealous efforts of expostulating friendship; and but for the unexpected payment of a large debt which had been given up as lost, and was almost forgotten, would probably have sacrificed himself to that sullen irrational independence, the too frequent infatuation of the present day, which leads us into habits of misery and ruin, and without imparting to us sufficient strength of mind to resist temptation or struggle with calamity, commences in folly, and concludes with self-destruction. Roused by the voice of friendship, and again restored to affluence, he returns with a stern reluctance, founded on a sense of his own unworthiness and vicious imprudence, to society and love; convinced that, after all the bustle of pleasure, and the glitter of wealth, real happiness is only to be found in moderate enjoyment, domestic tranquillity, and social virtue. This work is equal to *Roderick Random* in original invention, interesting combination of incident, fine ridicule, and useful application to the purposes of life, and is, perhaps, superior to it in genuine humour and profound learning. His feast given by the *Republican Doctor*, after the manner of the ancients, is well managed, and replete with rich strokes of humour and pointed satire; which, in the rancour of Toryism, he directed with eagerness against his Whig-opponent, Akenfide. Yet, in this episode, and other parts of the work, he has, with some justice, been thought low, indelicate, and immoral; but it should be recollected, that in delineations of certain circumstances, and certain characters, it is difficult for the author, who draws from nature and real life, to avoid shocking the fastidious eye of nicety and scrupulous decorum. The path of humour is pleasant and inviting; but it is a dangerous one, and too often leads us astray into the by-roads of indelicacy, as well as ill-nature. It is of the nature of all humour, to be sometimes gross and sometimes inelegant. Smollett's taste for ridicule and satire, as has been already observed, was strong, but indelicate, which made him not over-curious in the choice of his topics: His style in picturing his characters, therefore, though masterly, is sometimes without that elegance of

hand which is required to correct and allay the force of his colouring. In this respect, the dialogue between *Piper* and the hedge-nymph his master had accidentally picked up on the road, and afterwards introduced into company as a fine lady, is culpably obscene, though the story is well told, and the character well imagined. The behaviour of *Pickle* to *Hornbeck* is also highly unjustifiable; not satisfied with injuring that unfortunate husband beyond repair, he adds personal violence to insult. Yet, with these, and other drawbacks, on the score of morality, the present writer cannot but consider *Peregrine Pickle*, contrary to the general opinion, as a first-rate novel, whose merits far exceed the modern puny productions of frivolous fashion and sickly sentiment, which load the shelves of our circulating libraries, and teach nonsense and iniquity to our wives and daughters. It is not, however, to be put into the hands of young persons without distinction and reserve; but when the judgment is ripened by reflection, and the morals out of danger, it will afford much useful instruction, as well as rational and elegant amusement.

His *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, and *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, are still in the list of what may be called reading novels, but there is no injustice in placing them in a rank below *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*. Invention, character, composition, incident, humour, and knowledge of mankind, are to be found in both; but situations are described which are hardly possible, and characters are painted, which, if not altogether unexampled, are at least incompatible with modern manners, and which ought not to be, as the scenes are laid in modern times. The history of *Count Fathom*, though improbable, is pleasing, and, upon the whole, not immoral, though in some places very indelicate. It is professedly written to unfold the mysteries of fraud, to instruct the ignorant, and entertain the vacant; but the characters of that profligate adventurer and his wicked associates, are represented in such horrible features, that humanity is shocked, and the imagination is disgusted. The representation of a virtuous character, in opposition to the adventurer, contributes, indeed, in some degree, to relieve the attention from a succession of flagitious objects, and by contrast, heightens the expression, and gives a relief to

the moral of the whole. But, the advantage of introducing vicious and profligate characters, into a moral production, by way of exposing them to shame and ridicule, may be reasonably doubted; for a series of crimes and follies may give a mind unseasoned by experience, an insight into vice which the good moral drawn from them may not prevent being put in practice. In many parts of this novel, it must be acknowledged, he has delightfully copied the style and manner of his master Le Sage; and it may be asserted, without hazard of contradiction, that his description of *Fathom's* adventure in Chap. XX. and XXI. is wrought up to a pitch of horror which rivals, if not exceeds, the most terrible touches in the "Castle of Otranto," surpasses every thing of the kind which we find in "The Romance of the Forest," or "The Mysteries of Udolpho." The history of *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, though still more improbable, has great merit, and is truly original in the execution, notwithstanding that the hint is borrowed from Don Quixote. There are many characters well drawn, many diverting incidents, and many fine strokes of genius, nature, and passion. But some of the humorous characters are exaggerated beyond all bounds of probability; and certain persons are too often introduced, particularly *Captain Crowe*, whose appearance is sometimes disgusting. It is written with the same vivacity and energy of expression which characterize his other productions.

His *Adventures of an Atom* belong to the class of compositions in fictitious history, in the form, rather than the substance of the work, which is all true in the main, though the circumstances are occasionally heightened by the decorations of fancy, or tinged by the dark hues of political prejudice. Having characterized the chiefs that disputed the administration of *Japan* (England), he professes to give "a plain narration of historical incidents, without pretending to philosophize like *Hume*, or dogmatize like *Smollett*." The characters of the Whig party are, in general, drawn with unwarrantable severity. Political prejudice never appears more justly reprehensible, than when it attempts to cast a veil over distinguished merit, and loads exalted characters with obloquy. Though the work, for ingenuity and contrivance in the composition,

is inferior, upon the whole, to his former productions, it is written, for the most part, with his usual energy and felicity of expression. His comparison of the *Council Board* to the allegorical *Table of Cebes*, is well managed; and his digressions on *alchemy, magic, necromancy, sorcery, or witchcraft*, display that peculiar combination of profound learning and genuine humour which forms the basis of ludicrous composition.

In his *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, he has carefully avoided the faults which may be justly charged to *Count Fathom* and *Sir Launcelet Greaves*. It consists of a series of letters written by different persons to their respective correspondents, in the manner of Richardson. It has no extravagant characters, nor unnatural situations; on the contrary, an admirable knowledge of life and manners is displayed, and most useful lessons are given, applicable and interesting to very common situations. It has all the spirit and vigour of his former works, and is evidently the production of a mind enriched and mellowed by experience, and softened, but not soured by misfortune. In the conduct of the characters of *Lisnabago, Tabitha Bramble*, and *Humphry Clinker*, there are many touches which occasion the most exquisite merriment. The whole work, indeed, abounds with situations of the truly comic kind; the incidents and characters are unfolded with fine turns of surprise, and it is among the few works of invention produced by the English writers, which will always continue in request.

A very obvious similitude is observable between the three heroes of Smollett's chief productions. *Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle*, and *Matthew Bramble*, are all brothers of the same family. The same satiric, cynical disposition, the same generosity and benevolence, are the distinguishing and characteristical features of all three; but they are far from being servile copies or imitations of each other. He seems to have described his own character at the different stages and situations of his life.

Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, and *Humphry Clinker*, are undoubtedly efforts of genius and fancy, which rival the masterly productions of the moral, the sublime, the pathetic, but tiresome Richardson, with all his profound and accurate knowledge of the various workings

of the human heart, and the ingenious, the humorous, but diffuse Fielding, with all his wit, learning, and knowledge of mankind. That Fielding repeatedly displays a thorough acquaintance with nature, and that innumerable passages may be pointed out in Richardson, which do equal credit to the goodness of his heart and the depth of his understanding, cannot be denied; yet, after perusing the wire-drawn pages of "Pamela," "Clarissa," and "Grandison," or the common-place introductory discussion and diffuse narrative of "Joseph Andrews," "Tom Jones," and "Amelia," we never quit them with so much reluctance, as we feel in closing the pages of Smollett, who, with less regularity of fable, and without introducing so much of what may be called fine writing, possesses, in an eminent degree, the art of rousing our feelings, and fixing the attention of his readers.

As a *journalist of travels*, he was petulant, illiberal, and almost on every occasion lost his temper; but some excuse is to be made for a frame convulsed by the pangs of disease, a spirit wounded by ingratitude, and a life embittered by disappointment and domestic calamity. Under such impressions, perhaps, he ought not to have written; but where is the man, who having once found solace in a pursuit, will not naturally seek for comfort and consolation in the same path? With these defects, the relation of his *Travels* deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is formed upon no hypothesis, but experiment; a man of sense divested of partiality, reasoning with freedom upon every occurrence, and exhibiting a naked view of objects and characters. It is executed upon an ethic plan, calculated to destroy error and false taste, to introduce and improve an acquaintance with men and things, to display a comparative sketch of human life, and to establish true notions of life and living.

"I chiefly consulted," says Lord Gardenstone in his "Travelling Memorandums,"—"Keysser, Moore, and Smollett. I was best pleased with my old and excellent friend Smollett. Testy and discontented as he is, he writes with perspicuity. His observations are generally sensible, and even his oddities are entertaining."

As a *dramatist*, his genius is of a less considerable character than might be expected from his unrivalled talent

for the description of life and manners. He was in possession of humour and of a peculiar kind of fancy. His wit had every character of fertile invention, true pleasantry, and flexibility to every subject. He was capable of delineating the individual object with peculiar happiness. But he beheld his powers in a light which deceived him, when he aimed at bringing his characters into the business of the stage, and creating a dramatic series of events. Here his judgment, but not his genius, failed him. His *Regicide*, though reckoned undramatic, excels, in language and situation, and every other dramatic requisite, most of the tragedies which were presented to the public at the time. It is animated, nervous, and pathetic. The character of the virtuous, brave, but unfortunate *Dunbar*, is finely contrasted with the headstrong, fierce, ambitious *Stuart*, while the amiable *Eleonora*, esteeming the first, but, in spite of herself, loving the latter, is distracted between her passion and her duty. Yet, with all its merits, it was never able to procure admission on the stage. It is censured by Churchill, with great satirical severity, in the following lines of his "Apology to the Critical Reviewers."

Who ever read the *Regicide*, but swore
The author wrote as man ne'er wrote before.
Others for plots and underplots may call,
Here's the right method—have no plot at all.
Who can so often in his cause engage,
The tiny pathos of the Grecian stage.
While horrors rise, and tears spontaneous flow,
As tragic ha! and no less tragic oh!
To praise his nervous weakness all agree,
And then for sweetness, who so sweet as he?
Too big for utterance when sorrows swell,
The too big sorrows flowing tears must tell.
But when these flowing tears must cease to flow,
Why—then the verse must speak again, you know.

In his *Reprisal*, written professedly for the theatre, he evinces dramatic powers, which, if he had persevered in writing for the stage, might have obtained him equal distinction in this department of literature. His comic genius has shown itself very conspicuously in this little piece. The characters of *Oclaber*, *Maclaymore*, *Champignon*, and *Block*, are natural and entertaining, and as finely distinguished as in any dramatic piece in the English language.

To suit the ungenerous pride of a London rabble, our Gallic neighbours are too much debased, and treated with illiberal contempt; though *Lieutenant Lyon's* concluding speech makes some amends for this fault.

As a poet, his compositions are so excellent in their kind, as to make us regret that they are not more numerous: Lively, humorous, witty, elegant, tender, pathetic, and sublime; happy and successful in whatever the universality of his genius prompted him to undertake; his spirit, his sentiment, his language, are full of nature, enthusiasm, and simplicity, and while a love of poetry remains among us, must always please the reader of taste and sensibility.

His *Ode to Independence*, the greatest effort of his genius, ranks with the lyric compositions of Dryden, Akenside, Collins, and Gray. It is written in the true spirit of lyric poetry. It is bold, various, ardent, and impetuous. It abounds with animated sentiments, glowing images, and nervous and energetic expressions. The introduction is poetical and abrupt.

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye;
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

The picture exhibited in these lines is striking, because the circumstances are happily chosen, briefly and distinctly delineated. It is sublime, because the images are few, and in themselves great and magnificent. The *lion heart and eagle eye*, suggest an idea of the high spirit and commanding aspect of *Independence*; and the poet following with *bosom bare*, denotes, in a picturesque manner, the eagerness and enthusiasm of the votary. After a brief address to *Independence*, imploring his protection, he sees, in idea, the high object of his adoration, and, in a strain of poetry, exceedingly wild and romantic, he rehearses his birth, education, and qualities.

Deep in the frozen regions of the north,
A goddess violated brought thee forth,
Immortal Liberty, whose look sublime
Hath bleach'd the tyrant's cheek in every varying clime!

Liberty, according to the poet's acceptation, means the security of our lives and possessions, and freedom from

external force. *Independence* is of higher import, and denotes that internal sense and consciousness of freedom, which beget magnanimity, fortitude, and that becoming pride, which leads us to respect ourselves, and do nothing unworthy of our condition. *Liberty*, therefore, is, with perfect propriety, said to be the mother of *Independence*, and *Disdain* his father—*Disdain* arising from indignation against an oppressor, and triumph on having frustrated or escaped his malice. This stern personage is strongly characterized in the following description :

Of ample front, the portly chief appear'd,
The hunted bear supplied a shaggy vest,
The drifted snow hung on his yellow beard,
And his broad shoulders brav'd the furious blast.

Men may enjoy liberty without independence ; they may be secure in their persons and possessions, without feeling any uncommon elevation of mind, or any sense of their freedom. But, if their liberty is attacked, they are alarmed ; they feel the value of their condition ; they are moved with indignation against their oppressors ; they exert themselves, and, if they are successful, or escape the danger that threatened them, they triumph ; they reflect on the happiness and dignity conferred by freedom ; they applaud themselves for their exertions ; become magnanimous and independent. There is, therefore, no less propriety in deducing the origin of *Independence* from *Disdain* and *Liberty*, than fixing the era of her birth. Our Saxon ancestors, free, simple, and inoffensive, were attacked, escaped the violence of their adversary, reflected on the felicity of their condition, and learned independence.

The education of *Independence*, and the scene of his nativity, are suited to his illustrious lineage, and to the high achievements for which he was destined.

The light he saw in Albion's happy plains,
Where, under covert of a flow'ring thorn,
While Philomel renew'd her warbled strains,
The auspicious fruit of stol'n embrace was born—
The mountain dryads seiz'd with joy
The smiling infant, to their charge consign'd ;
The Doric muse caress'd the favourite boy ;
The hermit Wisdom stor'd his opening mind.

The imagery in these lines is soft and agreeable, the language smooth, and the versification harmonious.

In the second antistrophe, he celebrates his heroic and beneficent actions, and returns, at the end of the third strophe, to acknowledge, with gratitude, the protection he had requested, and the power of *Independence*, in preserving him untainted by the debasing influences of grandeur, and the admiration of vain magnificence. Animated with this reflection, and conscious of the dignity annexed to an independent state of mind, he inveighs against these *minions of Fortune*, who would impose upon mankind by the ostentation of wealth, and the parade of pageantry.

In fortune's car behold that minion ride,
 With either India's glittering spoils oppress;
 So moves the sumpter-mule in harness'd pride,
 That bears the treasure which he cannot taste.
 For him let venal bards disgrace the bay,
 And hireling minstrels wake the tinkling string;
 Her sensual suares let faithless pleasure lay;
 And all her jingling bells fantastic folly ring;
 Disquiet, doubt, and dread, shall intervene;
 And nature, still to all her feelings just,
 In vengeance hang a damp on every scene,
 Shook from the baleful pinions of disgust.

These lines, embellished by fancy, and recommended to the ear by harmony, are the invective of truth and honest indignation.

The last antistrophe has an air of softness, benignity, and mildness, that leaves a very pleasing effect on the mind of the reader, animated with sentiments of public virtue, glowing with self-approbation, and fired with all the ardour and enthusiasm of the poet.

His poems on occasional subjects are marked with the different dispositions which must have prevailed at different times of his life. His *Advice* and *Reproof* bear testimony to his political and literary prejudices, but they abound in manly sentiments, and indignant satire, expressed in forcible and elegant language. His elegantly-plaintive *Love-Elegy* is pure nature. It is tender, sentimental, and pathetic; and the happy simplicity and unaffected manner, interest and charm the reader of natural taste. His *Tears of Scotland* ought not to be mentioned without every commendation. It discovers a genius equally fitted for the pathetic and the sublime. Whatever may be thought of the subject, it unites a glow of poetical en-

thusiasm, with a high degree of that eloquent simplicity, which appears so easy, and which is yet so difficult to imitate. The following passage, among others, is exquisitely tender and beautiful.

The pious mother doom'd to death,
Forlaken wanders o'er the heath;
The bleak wind whistles round her head,
Her helpless orphans cry for bread;
Devoid of shelter, food, and friend,
She views the shades of night descend,
And stretch'd beneath th' inclement skies,
Weeps o'er her tender babes, and dies.

His *Ode to Leven Water* discovers delicacy of sentiment, and picturesque description, joined to simplicity of taste. The images are pastoral and pleasing, and the versification correct and harmonious. He celebrates his native stream with all the elegant simplicity of an Arcadian shepherd. His *Odes to Mirth and Sleep*, are not of the highest kind, but they have enthusiasm, and spirit, and propriety of versification. His *Songs* are spirited, ingenious, and witty; a few are elegant, tender, and pathetic.

